

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 27-30 are pending; no claims are newly added, amended, or canceled herewith.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 27 and 28 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over Claims 1-3 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,618,550; and Claims 29 and 30 were allowed. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 29 and 30 are allowed.

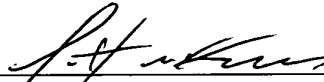
The filing of a terminal disclaimer to obviate a rejection based on nonstatutory double patenting is not an admission of the propriety of the rejection. The "filing of a terminal disclaimer simply serves the statutory function of removing the rejection of double patenting, and raises neither a presumption nor estoppel on the merits of the rejection." *Quad Environmental Technologies Corp. v. Union Sanitary District*, 946 F.2d 870, 20 USPQ2d 1392 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Accordingly, Applicants filing of the attached disclaimer is provided for facilitating a timely resolution to prosecution only, and should not be interpreted as an admission as to the merits of the obviated rejection.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of Reference AJ filed by Information Disclosure Statement on October 9, 2002. Reference AJ was not initialed by the Examiner on the PTO 1449 form attached to the Office Action dated May 20, 2004. A copy of the papers filed, including a copy of the date stamped filing receipt is attached hereto.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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